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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses how a holistic, collaborative approach to advising can be developed and what important pieces are needed to implement an effective advising system for the 1990s at Ferris State University (FSU). These actions/policies are recommended: (1) see advising as a university-wide responsibility with collaboration on the delivery of advising services; (2) define information that is readily available to all persons interested in the advising process and eliminate redundancy of information; (3) develop a personal advising system; (4) break advising skills up into the areas of information giving, communication process, and helping skills and work to enhance each area; (5) recognize the special needs of special populations at FSU, such as the needs of nontraditional students, women, minority students, undecided students and underprepared students; and (6) clarify the responsibilities of being an advisor. The paper concludes that there are several areas of the advising process at FSU that could be improved with little or no cost to the institution. It is claimed that these changes would help bring about a more collaborative and holistic system of advising. It is recommended that FSU examine alternative advising systems that would have new cost but would help the institution keep competitive through the 1990s. (ABL)

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TIMME CENTER FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE
FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

1988-89 INFORMATION PAPER

A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO IMPROVING ADVISING AT FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

by
TERRENCE J. DOYLE

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Introduction

Advising today's college student can no longer be seen as the sole responsibility of an institution's faculty. Advising has been an exclusive faculty function since the first advising system was put into place at Johns Hopkins University in 1876. From its beginning to World War II, advising was seen as the hallowed domain of faculty who saw themselves as the only ones qualified to give guidance in matters of course and curricula choice. After WW II, colleges experienced tremendous student growth which brought with it increased dissatisfaction on the part of faculty with an ever increasing advising load. This dissatisfaction was coupled with a new demand for faculty to improve their professional development outside the classroom. Faculty spent increased time on research, publications, committee work and consulting. As a result, advising became less and less important, and its status became that of the clerical activity of signing a schedule. (Delisle 1965; Appleton, Moore and Vinton, 1978)

However, in the 1960's which ushered in the era of student as consumer and in the 1970's which brought a decline in student enrollment and federal revenues for colleges, student advising took on an increasingly more important role. Advising was seen as a intricate part of the economic survival of colleges and universities. Improving advising meant better retention, which meant more revenue. This increase in importance driven by economic survival led to a renewed interest in research on student advising. Much of this new research is summarized by Thomas Grites in Advising: Getting us Through the Eighties.

Grites points to three general findings. First, good academic advising cannot be done in isolation. The successful advising program or individual advisor-advisee relationship does not occur soley in the advisor's office. A new awareness and use of other campus personnel, services and resources by both the advisor and advisee are needed if advising is to be delivered effectively. Second, there appears to be no single formula for successful academic advising but rather each university and each advisor must decide what appropriate delivery system(s) to put in place. Grites points out that many successful systems are being used nationwide and there is no need to reinvent the wheel. The third finding was that the role of academic advising in the future of higher education will become more prominent, especially as enrollments continue to decline. Grite's findings clearly point to the importance of academic advising and to the conclusion that advising in the 1990's must be a university-wide responsibility. It is equally clear at Ferris State University (FSU) with its complex curricula, limited resources, ever increasing underprepared and other special advising populations, that a holistic, collaborative approach to the delivery of advising services is needed. The days of faculty having all the answers are long past.

This information paper will discuss how a holistic, collaborative approach to advising can be developed and what important pieces are needed to implement an effective advising system for the 1990's at FSU.

What Should Ferris Be Doing?

The research on student advising by DeLesle (1965), Hardee (1970), and Crockett (1979) suggest three basic but crucial steps an institution must take in developing an effective advising program. First is to develop a clearly defined statement of what the advising program is to be on their campus. (See attachment 1). This statement must articulate the philosophy, scope, and direction of the advising program and must be clearly communicated to all who will be involved in the advising process. Currently, FSU has no such statement addressing the advising process. Although our role and mission statement articulates our purpose, it does not identify the way we plan to develop, advise and counsel students who need to access the educational opportunities available on campus. The second step for an institution is to develop specific objectives that are outcome oriented. These objectives would set in place the specific steps the institution would take to deliver advising services to its student population. (See attachment 2) Currently, FSU has many services in place that deal with the advising process but has no set of objectives. Faculty at FSU are assigned advisees as part of their contract with the university and are required to have published office hours. In addition, a variety of services and quality information is available to assist advisors from resources across campus; however, these services and information are not coordinated, nor do they reflect any clear direction FSU thinks advising should take.

With the onset of phone-in registration in 1987 at FSU, many of the resources used for advising now sit idle as many students have no obligation to seek out their advisor. Likewise, the most diligent of faculty advisors cannot always convince a student to come in for a scheduling or information visit. The need for an institutional plan of attack on how to deliver advising service is a clear necessity.

The third step is an institutional-wide commitment to its advising statement and objectives. An advising system needs strong, on-going campus-wide support to be effective. All campus constituencies need to affirm their support and commit to the goal of maintaining a university-wide advising program.

FSU does have positive pockets of advising. There are many dedicated faculty, counselors and administrators who make significant efforts to deliver appropriate and high quality advising. The admissions, registrars, and business offices along with the housing and food service areas play an important role in contributing to the quality of student life. However, there is not a university-wide, coordinated commitment to a concept of student advising that could produce the best results for FSU and its students.

Ferris State suffers from the lowest freshman to sophmore year retention rate of any university in the state of Michigan, and by the nature of its vocational technical curricula, will most likely always face the problem of the underprepared student. FSU must move toward a university-wide advising program that coordinates and organizes the energy and talent of ITS staff, faculty and administrators in a way that will allow maximum effectiveness in the delivery of advising service. Ferris' survival into the year 2000 may depend on doing so.

What Can We Do Right Now?

1. See Advising as a University-Wide Responsibility.

Beal and Noel, in their 1980 ACT publication on student retention, report that although no one single factor is most important in student retention, a student's feeling of "belonging" to an institution is a major contributor to a student's persistence at an institution. This feeling of belonging is a sense that must be communicated, not by one person (a faculty advisor), but by the institution as a whole. It is also a feeling that cannot be put off until the second week of classes when most freshmen are finally assigned an advisor, but must be communicated from the first contact the student has with the university. As a result, that makes it the responsibility of the admissions, housing, business, registrar's, and financial aid offices, as well as the counseling office in each school, the orientation leaders and anyone else whose job it is to assist students

in making the adjustment to life at Ferris State.

The way in which this sense of belonging is communicated is critical to its success. There are two major areas that each office, department, or organization that interacts with students must address. The first is the maintaining of accurate up-to-date information. The literature on successful advising programs suggest three effective ways of doing this. The first and most common, is to conduct regular staff meeting in which all department staff are kept up-to-date of any changes in policy, procedures, regulations, cost, etc. The second is to schedule regular cross departmental meetings in which various departments involved in the advising program share information and develop relationships that enhance the flow of information and also help improve the student referral system. When a person in the business office can send a student to the registrar's office with a personal referral "go see Mr. or Mrs. _", the student feels better and the system works better.

The third idea, developed at Iowa State University, involves publishing an advisory newsletter four times yearly. The newsletter brings together all changes or information updates from across campus that impact student advising. In addition, it serves to keep everyone up-to-date by reminding them of changes in their own area and informing them of changes across campus. With the incredible quantity of information that impacts students today, an ongoing update that puts the information in one place appears to be an excellent addition to any advising program.

The second major area is the appropriate delivery of advising information. It is vital to the success of any advising program that its personnel recognize that a university exists to serve the needs of its students and that the students, especially new students, often find college an alien environment, full of endless opportunities for embarrassment and frustration. Specifically, advising personnel should have basic empathy and problem solving training that can assist them in understanding and assisting students in the ways that will most easily facilitate the solving of student problems or concerns. This kind of basic training is usually available from a campus professional either in the academic or psychological counseling area or through the psychology, social work or communications departments.

In addition, basic training in conflict management and listening skills are also important. Stacy Palmer, in a 1984 Chronicle of Higher Education article on advice to advisors, urges advising personnel to avoid stereotyping students. Although a student's question may be the same one that the last one hundred students has asked, to the student asking the question it's the first time. Remembering each student's uniqueness will help in viewing each student encounter as an important one which deserves a respectful and pleasant response.

The need to collaborate on the delivery of advising services and the need to see the advising role as a vital "service" to the student is paramount to the development of a holistic advising program.

2. Tap University Resources

There are several basic questions to be answered in the area of advising resources. These include: What are the resources available to faculty and those who support the advising process? What is the quality of the resources? How accessible are the resources? How easy to use are the resources and can the resources be improved?

To begin to answer these questions, the information that is readily available to all persons interested in the advising process at FSU must be defined.

FSU Schedule Book

Each quarter the university publishes a class schedule book. This book, when closely examined, provides a wealth of information that answers many of the most commonly asked questions about courses, academic policies, scheduling, and where to go to get answers about course or curricula questions.

Telephone Directory

The university's telephone directory is another excellent source of information. An advisor will find information on every student organization, club, fraternity, sorority, and campus ministry. There is a one-page listing of all major campus offices and the alphabetical listing of all FSU employees and students.

FSU Bulletin

The school bulletin published every three years is the definitive source of information on courses, curricula, student life, and the policies and regulations of the university.

Student Handbook

The student handbook published yearly gives a complete accounting of student life on campus. It includes information on academics, housing, student organizations, sports and recreation, emergencies, health care and much more.

Check Sheets

Curriculum check sheets, outlining the specific course requirements and time tables for course completion for each program and degree are published by each school. These are available in the dean's office and, in some schools, are distributed to advisors at the beginning of each academic year.

Program Brochures

Program brochures describing the specific opportunities offered by a particular degree or program are also available for most every program at FSU. These brochures answer basic questions like what does a person with an applied biology degree do, and where can I get more information? These are available in the dean's office of each school.

Employee Handbook

FSU's employee handbook published every two years outlines all university policies. It covers everything from sexual harassment to motor vehicles and covers FSU activities and services from athletics to weather bulletins.

Expense Card

FSU's estimated expense card published yearly defines all tuition, room and board cost for the academic year.

Computer Assistance

The use of a personal computer to assist in advising is also available to faculty that have access to a PC hooked into the FSU mainframe computer. Information including a student's admit status, curriculum, grade record,

any holds preventing registration, local address and phone are all available from the mainframe information. In addition, an advisor can check instantly whether courses are open, the number of course sections available, and who's teaching the class. This mainframe access is available from Computer Operations.

Mainframe access is used by the staff of the Collegiate Skills Program and has had a major impact on the quality of advising service given to students. An advisor can check an advisee's schedule instantly to insure its appropriateness. When a schedule is discovered that is inappropriate or does not fulfill prerequisites, the advisee is called and told to make the appropriate changes.

In addition to university publications, most schools at FSU deliver in some form additional information to their faculty about advising. The Schools of Arts and Sciences, Allied Health and Technology have excellent faculty advisor handbooks that define the goal of student advising and give important information about course placement, and how to use ACT and student record data in advising students. They also list and describe services available to assist students, curriculum advising committee chairpersons, school policies and regulations, information on advance placement tests and a thorough resource list for easy referral.

The School of Education, through its counseling office, provides faculty with an advising packet containing important placement and service information that would especially be helpful to new faculty.

The School of Business used an advisor newsletter this year to keep faculty up-to-date and remind them of the major issues involved in providing good academic advising.

It is clear that the individual resources available to FSU advising personnel, when combined, are comprehensive, well-organized, and very easy to use. The schedule book alone can answer virtually any question a student or advisor would have dealing with classes, probation, tuition, grades, graduation or where to go to get any additional information needed. The resources available, although requiring the advisor to use several different pieces of information to find all the answers, are of a high quality and can serve the advisor well.

Accessing all of the advising information mentioned is quite easy. Much of it is distributed directly to advisors on a regular basis and the remainder can be acquired by a phone call or visit to the appropriate dean's office or other campus office.

For those advisors who have questions not answered by the available resource, the quickest source of advising information is the educational counselor in the advisor's school or in the school for which the question pertains. The educational counselor can further direct the advisor if additional information is needed from other sources.

For the advisors who want to be effective facilitators and resource persons for his/her advisees, FSU has provided a wealth of information to assist them. Even the new advisors or the advisors working with a special population of students are only a phone call away from the information that they need.

The single deficiency in the resource area, is that the information appears in so many different forms and is disseminated from so many different offices on campus that there is a great deal of redundancy of information that could be eliminated if a coordinated university advising program were in place.

3. Develop a Personal Advising System

University Level

As mentioned earlier in this report, Grites (1979) reports there is no single formula for successful advising. Each institution and each advisor must choose the strategies that best serve their student's advising needs. There are many strategies that work. The ACT/NACADA National Recognition Program for Academic

Advising (1984) singled out seventeen universities for advising excellence. In general, these outstanding programs used advising strategies that fell into four categories: 1) coordinated services and information designed to assist individual advisors, 2) advising centers that employ para-professional and student staffs and focus mostly on under-prepared or undecided students, 3) orientation classes that help to facilitate the advising process or in some cases were the advising program, and 4) peer advising programs.

Currently at FSU, three of these four categories are in use. The most prominent one is in the area of coordinated services and information provided to advisors. This is done in a decentralized system in which each school's counseling office, most often in conjunction with an assistant/associate dean, provide advising assignments and information and assistance to the faculty of their school. Advisors are assigned most often to students in their program or curricula area. This system relies on the faculty to be active in seeking out their advisees and on the student to actively seek advising assistance.

A second system being used at Ferris State University is in the Collegiate Skills Program, where orientation classes (G-E 103-G-E 104) are used to deliver the greatest part of the advising service. The instructor of the class automatically becomes the advisor of his/her students. Students are required to meet twice each term with the course instructor on an individual basis as part of the class. In addition, the class allows for day-to-day monitoring of student progress. The course also provides a convenient vehicle for course scheduling for winter and spring terms. The orientation courses, by their design, address the typical transition to college problems that freshmen face, problems that often times would surface during an advising session.

The third area is the advising center concept which is being used in the Minority Retention Program. In this system, baccalaureate level personnel (called project assistants) work out of the Academic Skills Center (ASC) in Bishop Hall 411 and use an intrusive model of intervention with minority students experiencing academic difficulty. The ASC provides a centralized location where students can call or come to get assistance with a variety of advising matters.

Based on my literature review and discussions with the educational counselors across campus and faculty advisors and department heads in the School of Arts and Sciences, two of the four categories identified by ACT/NACADA report hold great promise for FSU. The first would be the expansion of the G-E 103 freshman orientation class to encompass all undecided and underprepared students. This student population would number around 1000. The use of an orientation class to facilitate the advising of these students would accomplish three major outcomes the literature has repeatedly pointed to as vital to quality advising. The first is strong faculty-student relationship. The use of G-E 103 in CSP enhances the relationship students have with their advisors. CSP faculty report a significant improvement in student interest and attitude following the first mandatory advising meeting during the first two weeks of class and contining throughout the term. They believe this improvement is a result of the G-E 103 class reinforcing the notion that the university does want the student to be here and that the advisor is genuinely interested in helping facilitate the student's success. The second outcome is an effective information delivery system. G-E 103 offers a nearly effortless and highly efficient method of delivering advising information. The G-E 103 class meets four times per week which makes delivering information easier and more efficient. It provides time for the information to be discussed in an atmosphere that allows students to ask questions and recognize that they are not the only one with a problem or concern. The third outcome is the ability to monitor student progress and to intervene before failure is imminent. The G-E 103 course allows daily monitoring of a student's overall adjustment to university life. It also provides an efficient mechanism for distributing the triweekly grade reports used in CSP that give the advisor the information needed to intervene before failure is imminent. A failure of many advising programs nationwide is in that they deliver service after the student is in a "failure situation" when the only advice that can be given is to drop the class. (Donovan 1977)

Crockett and Levitz (1983) reported 27% of the 285 four-year public institutions surveyed in a national study

of academic advising use an orientation class to advise freshman students. An additional benefit of an orientation class on a campus that has phone registration is the control of student scheduling that can be maintained by using the class as a vehicle to develop student schedules. The orientation class concept as an advising model has gained great popularity in the 1980's through the development of the freshman year experience (FYE) concept started by John Gardner at the University of South Carolina. This concept addresses the entire process of a student's transition to college, not just the academic part. This holistic approach is an outgrowth of the research in the late 1970's by Donovan (1977), Webb (1977), and others who looked at successful remedial and developmental programs nationwide and found repeatedly that intensive attention to affective considerations was the keystone of a successful program. Webb found that while students must be helped in basic skill areas in order to "catch up", they must also be taught to understand how the academic world operates—"to catch on". The key to this process of catching on was that for every student there was someone at the university monitoring that student's progress. The main component of the FYE is an orientation transition course for all "at-risk" freshman students where this monitoring can take place.

The second strategy that would appear promising for FSU would be the establishment of a freshman advising center. Crockett and Levitz (1983) report 39 percent of four-year public universities surveyed have advising centers. Advising centers developed originally in the 1950's and 1960's as a method of dealing with swelling enrollments and reduced interest by faculty in advising (Baxter 1971).

The centers of the 1980's are most often focused on the undecided and underprepared students. This focus is due to the tendency of this population to get easily frustrated, be less satisfied with college and attrit at high levels (Polson & Jurich, 1979). Advising centers establish a singular student referral site for faculty and allow for easy student self referral. The center's activities include monitoring students, providing a variety of information on careers and curricular programs and scheduling classes. In addition, the center becomes a home away from home for some students. The center can be staffed by baccalaureate level personnel, paraprofessionals and student staff, and thus operate at a lower cost then other advising systems. Given the complexity of trying to advise undecided and underprepared students and the immense knowledge of resources and career information that advisors need be effective, the idea of a center where trained staff are ready to deliver advising services to the undecided and underprepared has much to recommend it.

For the orientation class or the advising center concept to work effectively at FSU, two major policy changes would need to be enacted. The first is eliminating the underprepared and undecided students from access to the phone-in registration system. Second, advisors would need the authority to be prescriptive in scheduling "at-risk" and undecided students. Currently an advisor's signature does not need to appear on a student's schedule, nor can an advisor mandate a student with low ACT scores into remedial classes even though it is obvious the student is ill-preprepared to handle regular course programming. FSU will need to address these two issues if the university is going to see a significant improvement in the advising process whether it moves to the orientation class or advising center concept or not.

Advisor Level

> *"Academic advising is a developmental process which assists students in the clarification of their life/career goals and in the development of educational plans for the realization of these goals. It is a decision-making process by which students realize their maximum educational potential through communication and information exchanges with an advisor; it is ongoing, multifaceted, and the responsibility of both student and advisor. The advisor serves as a facilitator of communication, a coordinator of learning experiences through course and career planning and academic progress review, and an agent of referral to other campus agencies as necessary."* (David S. Crockett, Vice President, Public Affairs, American College Testing Program.)

The task of being an academic advisor as defined by David Corckett requires not only dedication, energy, and caring, but the appropriate knowledge, communication skills and awareness of the possible systems of delivering advising information that would best fit a faculty member's schedule, personality and skill level as an advisor.

The literature on advising suggests several effective systems. The first and most common is one-to-one. A one-to-one ongoing faculty student interaction has a stronger relationship to student satisfaction with the college experience than any other involvement variable or any other student or institutional characteristic. (Astin 1977)

Effective one-to-one advising usually requires intrusiveness on the part of the advisor, good communication skills, empathy and understanding, up-to-date knowledge of advising information and availability to accommodate varying student schedules. (Bess 1973)

A second system is group advising. In Crockett and Leviety's national study, forty percent of public, four-year universities and colleges reported active use of group advising strategies as a major form of student advising. (Crockett, Levity 1983)

Grouping advisees can be done by availability, interest, or student needs. The advantages of group advising are time savings, more efficient delivery of information, and peer interaction. Faculty with heavy teaching loads and larger numbers of advisees can use grouping as an effective way to meet their advising commitment. (McCusker and Osterlund 1979)

Peer advising is another effective system when it is overseen by the faculty advisor. The use of an upper division or graduate student who works with a faculty member on the specific advising needs of his/her advisees can be used to meet with advisee and deliver quality advising information. This system is used in many varying forms at 39% of the colleges Crockett and Levity, (1983) surveyed. This system does require some additional funding to pay peer advisors but in situations where faculty are overloaded with advising responsibilities, the peer systems will work successfully. (King 1979)

Self-advising is a system where all pertinent information a student needs to make appropriate scheduling decisions is provided to the student before the student ever meets with his/her advisor. This advanced preparation has shown to reduce the amount of time needed for advising and has shown students to be more willing to accept advising advice. (Lewis 1972)

Advising contracts is another method that has been successful. It defines with each advisee what is to be accomplished, the principal duties of each party and the procedures to be used to monitor, evaluate or change the advising relationship. It specifies goals and limits and can note available resources and have a time table for advising meetings. (Kramer 1977)

All of these systems have for some advisor the solution to his/her advising concerns. The matching of the advising system to the advisor is a matter of personal need and choice. No one system has clearly shown itself to be superior to the others, but all share in common the need for active involvement by the advisor in the advising process.

4. Improve Communication Skills

Once an advisor has developed a delivery system for meeting the commitments to his/her advisee, the next step to the overall enhancement of the advising process is to look at the communication of the advice being given. This can be done by breaking advising skills up into three areas: information giving, communication process, and helping skills.

Earlier in this report the importance of having accurate, up-to-date information and the ways in which advising personnel can ensure their information is up-to-date and accurate was discussed.

Communicating with an advisee, like any other human interaction, is more effective in a caring environment where the advisee is shown empathy, understanding, and respect. This can only be accomplished by advisors who have a genuine interest in the concerns and problems of their advisees.

Specifically, advisor-advisee communications can be enhanced by the use of the following behaviors.

1) Make sure the time set aside for the advising sessions is adequate in length and is singularly designated for advising. This would include reducing interruption by having messages held, taking the phone off the hook, and having no other work that needs your immediate attention.

2) Make the session personable by seeking information about the general ongoing nature of the advisee's life and using first names. If the session is not an initial session, remember some personal information about the advisee and use it to reestablish a good rapport.

3) Be a good listener. This can be done by continually feeding back information to the advisee for clarification and by asking questions that seek out more information. Using open ended questions promotes more detailed discussions and usually leads to better interaction.

4) Keep in mind (especially at an initial meeting) the advisee may not know what questions to ask. Having a checklist of important information will help to ensure all bases have been covered.

5) Keep notes that demonstrate your interest in what the advisee has to say and can be reviewed before subsequent meeting to help identify starting points. These behaviors coupled with genuine respect, acceptance and empathy for the advisee will lead to better advising relationships.

The role of advisor as helper is equally important to the overall effectiveness of advising. The keys to being an effective helper lie in being a facilitator who assists students in coping and mastering the challenges of college life, not in removing those challenges from their path. An advisor should be supportive, but realistic. An advisee is looking to the advisor for guidance. Given the poor metacognitive skills of many college students today, (Ryan 1981) students don't always have a realistic picture of themselves with regard to skills and abilities. Taking the time to do an evaluation of each advisee's file for strengths and weaknesses and guiding them toward realistic goals is a major part of good advising.

Another important helping role is using the advising session to teach good decision making skills. Advisors should not do everything for students, but rather facilitate advising sessions in a way that puts the responsibility for decision making on the student where it ultimately belongs. An additional helping role is that of being a confidant. Advisors should make sure information about advisees that is shared with colleagues is for professional reasons. The advisor advisee role must be one of trust and mutual respect. A positive level of trust opens the door to communication and to a greater willingness to listen on the part of the advisee.

In the end, the advising relationship is like all other relationships; it flourishes in an atmosphere of respect and trust and is inhibited by a lack of the same.

5. Recognize the Special Needs of Special Population at FSU.

In demographer Harold Hodgkinson's report All One System (1987) he outlines the demographic patterns that can be expected in U.S. higher education in the next ten years. This data paints a picture of major change in the race, age, and sex of the students that will be attending college in the 1990's and beyond. Hodgkinson reports that by the year 2000, 52% of all college students will be women, 50% of all students will be over the

age of 23, and 25% will be minorities, an increase of 21% from 1960. Forty-five percent of all students will be part-time enrollees and 85% will be commuters. Hodgkison points out in a separate report he has done on the state of Michigan that currently forty-two percent of all elementary students are minorities, and the fastest growing populations in the state are Hispanic and Asian.

The changing faces of campuses nationwide will not bypass FSU. The average age of a current FSU student is 21.78 years. The 1988 fall enrollment showed slightly over 1700 non-traditional students, an increase of 9% over 1986 enrollment figures. The number of women enrolled has increased by nearly 2% since 1986, and minority FTIAC enrollment was slightly up in 1988 due in most part to an increase of foreign and refugee students. The current enrollment trends, although only showing slight increases, point the way of the future at FSU. Delivering advising assistance to this "new" college population requires a special understanding of the needs of each population.

Non-Traditional Students

Non-traditional students, better known at FSU as "new traditional students", are defined as students over the age of 23. These are students who are returning to college after interruptions such as military service, raising a family or being fully employed, or in some cases, are experiencing college for the first time. Most often, non-traditional students are enrolled in college while continuing to work and raise a family. Schloisberg (1978) suggests that non-traditional students behave according to social rather than biological norms, according to "styles" rather than "ages" of life and differently according to their sex. Specific characteristics are often a lack of self-confidence, an unrealistic expectation for achievement, value conflicts with younger students, only short term and immediate use of planning, poor study skills and a tendency to not seek out assistance. Their transition process to college requires adaptability, reassessment and oftentimes, the establishing of new identities. These characteristics are quite different from the traditional 18-year-old freshman. Advisors, to deal effectively with non-traditional students, need to understand adult development and behavior. They need to use the background and experience of the student to help focus the student's goals. Most non-traditional students do know what they don't want, but are unclear as to what they do want. The delivery of advising services to this population needs to be done in ways and at times not normally done with the traditional college student. Because most non-traditional students are commuters, advising needs to be done by phone, and mail, as well as in person. A timetable to see advisees may have to include evenings and Saturdays. One of the most successful non-traditional advising programs is at the University of Iowa. Its start was due to a large enrollment increase in evening and Saturday class programs. The university found that to effectively deliver needed advising information, the advisor needed to fit his/her schedule to the schedule of the student, not the opposite as is too often the case. At the University of Iowa, advisors travel to off-campus class sites to meet with students and keep regular evening and Saturday hours.

As the population of non-traditional student continues to increase, the delivery of effective advising services will become increasingly important. It is clear from the research in this area, that new training will be needed at FSU for advisors if they are to be effective.

Women

In 1960, Hodgkinson (1985) reports that 60% of all family units were the traditional family where the father worked and the mother stayed home to raise two, three or four kids. In 1986 only 4% of family units fell into this traditional category. Women have gone to work and to college in ever-increasing numbers. In 1960, 37% of college students were women. In the year 2000, Hodgkinson reports that 52% of all college students will likely be women, an estimated population of over 6 million. The literature on advising programs for women suggest four important areas that programs and advisors need to be cognizant of in order to improve the quality of advising services for women. The first is the need to identify women role-models on the college campus. Currently at FSU approximately 41.5% of the student population are women, and there are approximately 180

women in faculty or administrative positions on campus. This represents about a 25 to 1 ratio.

The second area is to provide advisors with training to develop a clear understanding of the internal and external forces exerted on women's career development. This would include looking at areas such as meshing of professional careers with a family and entering of traditionally male oriented professions.

The third area is to develop training sessions that assist advisors in developing ways to stimulate confidence in women's intellectual aspirations and performance. The fourth area is for advisors to encourage women to take more academic risks, especially into areas that traditionally have been considered male areas of study (Newburg 1978, O'Neil 1979). It is interesting to note here that of the 17 advising programs that ACT and NACADA recognized for advising excellence in 1984, none of them focused on women as a specific target population for which special services were needed even though the current literature on advising clearly identifies them as a special population needing special services.

Minority Students

Minority students statewide in Michigan represent 14% of the total population of college students, but represent only 5% of the total number of graduates (Office of Minority Equity 1988). Minority students share many of the same stereotypic myths and attitudes about their abilities and career expectations as women (Goodrich 1976). These problems are complicated by a higher tendency for financial difficulties, fewer role models on campus (FSU has approximately 600 minority students and 3 minority faculty currently in advising roles) and typically a lack of social and cultural programs suited to their interests (Nieves 1977). The research on minority students sites the advisor role as a major factor in contributing to improved student retention (Beal Noel 1980). The recommendations on improving the delivery of advising services to minorities include 1) having a welcoming attitude, 2) learning more about a minority advisee's background, abilities and goals so as to better provide appropriate academic assistance, 3) encouraging participation in campus life, (Astin, 1983 sites involvement in college life as a major factor in college satisfaction and persistance.) and 4) if needed, act "in loco parentis" (Thomas 1978).

FSU does have a Minority Retention Program that has been funded by a State of Michigan Special Services Support grant. The program is in its second year, and uses an intrusive model of advising. The grant personnel identify all at-risk minority students by HPA, credit hour production, and by seeking academic progress reports on minority students from faculty early on in each term. Once identified, students are contacted for advising assistance. Students are made aware of the many academic services available on campus (ie. tutoring, Academic Skills Center workshops, Starr Building writing lab), and specific recommendations are made for students to seek assistance. This intrusive approach, which was modeled after the CSP advising program, has been effective. In its first year, the Minority Retention Program improved minority retention from freshman to sophomore year by 29% over the previous year's retention rate. The MRP, however, does not remove responsibility for advising from faculty. Its policy is to refer a student back to his or her advisor when such a referral is appropriate.

Undecided

In the past fifteen years, undecided students have gained a lot of attention from advising programs nationwide. This is because they attrit in higher numbers than students who have even tentative curriculum or career choices. Being undecided is often times really a case of degree of undecidedness. Students fall into three basic categories 1) absolutely no plan or idea, 2) tentatively undecided looking at several career options and 3) committed, but not personally ready or not permitted by their institution to finalize their choice. Advising undecided students involves first determining the personal level of indecision and then acting as a generalist supplying a variety of ideas and options for students to explore. Advising the undecided requires sound knowledge of the services, courses and information centers on campus that can assist in career exploration.

At FSU we do offer a career exploration course, G-E 102, and have career exploration material available to all students through the Academic Skills Center, Bishop Hall 411. Through the Office of Minority Affairs, a new series of workshops devoted to exploring the many curricula and career options available at FSU is being planned as part of the MRP.

The literature points out two very important points for advisors of undecided students. First, the label "undecided" should be considered positive and healthy. Exploring career and curricular options thoroughly before deciding can reduce the tendency that many students have to change major and career plans at times when such changes mean taking additional credit hours, incurring more cost and spending more time to complete a degree. The second is to resist the tendency to direct students into areas that the adivsor is most familiar with. This is especially important in view of Harvard professor William Perry's research on the stages of a college student's development. The first stage is one in which entering college students tend to be dualistic. In this stage they view the advisor as an authority figure who has the "right answer". The student's perception of the world tends to be absolute with little or no self-processing occurring. The student's tendency is to accept blindly, unless facilitated to explore and examine other options. The advisor's responsibility must be to facilitate this exploration.

Underprepared

This group of students twenty-five years ago did not exist on many college campuses, or at least were never identified as a special group needing special advising. Currently, over 95% of all colleges and universities nationwide offer some kind of developmental or remedial assistance to students (John Rouche 1984). The underprepared or developmental student, unfortunately, represents an enormous portion of the college population. This trend, according to Hodgekinson will get worse, not better, in the next two decades. Offering advising assistance to underprepared students requires many of the same skills as serving any other special population.

Lowell Walter, in his article "Lifeline to the Underprepared ", suggests five steps to delivering quality advising to the underprepared. They are, first to identify those who are under-prepared. FSU advisors do have high school transcripts and ACT data on advisees. In addition, the Academic Skills Center will do reading and study skills assessment testing upon request. The ACT printout advisors receive suggests appropriate remedial classes for students whose scores warrant it. Most recently, the Language and Literature and Math Departments have proposed to set in place mandatory placement requirements for the developmental ENG 074 and MTH 090 courses. Second, make certain the underprepared are brought in contact with the resources they need. This step is not always easy even for the most intrusive of advisors. For example, if a student decides not to take a developmental reading class even though his/her ACT scores warrent it, currently there is no mechanism in place to mandate the student enroll in the class. Third, say to the student "I can help you". Underprepared students have a great deal of anxiety about their ability to deal effectively with the academic demands of college. They need to be reassured that help is available and that someone cares. Fourth is to serve as an advocate for the underprepared. The underprepared students are typically passive and unable to find their way through the college system on their own. They need assistance if they are to discover how the college system works. Fifth is to protect your credibility. Be sure you are teaching your advisee how to operate eventually on their own and not trying to help them avoid the usual standards and requirements of the college.

FSU's Collegiate Skills Program focuses on the most highly underprepared of the freshman students, but sees only 20% of those who need special services. The CSP has demonstrated that when academic services and quality advising are delivered, significant improvements can be made in the retention and academic performances of underprepared students. The retention average for the General Studies curricula before CSP was 35% from freshman to sophomore year from 1982-84. Since 1985 when CSP began, retention has averaged 53% with 1987 retention topping 60%. As the special populations grow at FSU, there comes an ever increasing need to develop a collaborative holistic approach to delivering advising assistance. Faculty

alone cannot be expected to shoulder the burden that these special populations place upon an advising system.

6. Clarify the Responsibilities of Being an Advisor

Woody Allen has said 90% of being effective in anything is showing up. This statement represents a certain truth in the delivery of advising services. The single most common complaint by students about advising service is that the advisor doesn't keep appointments or office hours. An advisor's responsibility begins with keeping office hours and keeping appointments. In addition to this basic commitment, there are a variety of other responsibilities and limitations of which advisors should be aware.

The Rights and Privacy Act

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1975 allows advisors to view students' educational records only on a need-to-know basis. Casual viewing or discussion of any student record data is a direct violation of the act. Misuse of sensitive data could have serious legal implications.

Student Confidentially

As stated earlier, it is difficult to build a trustworthy relationship without maintaining a level of confidentiality. However, this should not preclude the exchange of helpful information between advisors and instructors or deans that would be in the best interest of the student.

Handling Emotional or Mental Difficulties

An advisor should not attempt to handle cases of emotional disturbances which fall outside the behavioral pattern of students adjudged reasonably normal. When complex problems arise concerning financial aid, mental or physical health, or personal-social counseling, faculty should refer students to professional personnel through the dean's office.

Criticism

An advisor should refrain from criticizing other advisors or faculty in the presence of an advisee. Making positive recommendations based on reputation or suggesting the students check with other students about a faculty member's teaching style or class difficulty are reasonable ways of handling students' questions that deal with the evaluation of colleagues.

Changing a Student's Schedule

An advisor cannot directly reduce or add to an advisees schedule even if the schedule appears to be inappropriate for that student. However, he/she can and should make strong recommendations to the student to change and refer the student to the educational counselor for further discussion as to the appropriateness of the courses chosen.

The most important thing in determining an advisor's responsibility and limitation is common sense. Whenever there is a doubt about a situation or issue, the safest and best method is to ask for help.

Conclusions

In summary, I believe there are several areas of the advising process at FSU that could be improved with little or no cost to the institution. These changes would help bring about a more collaborative and holistic system of advising. In addition, I believe the institution needs to look carefully at some new alternative advising systems that would have new cost, but would help keep FSU competitive through the 1990's.

1. FSU needs to develop a university-wide advising statement that defines the scope, intent and direction the FSU advising system will take into the year 2000. This statement needs a set of objectives that are outcome oriented and are endorsed by all areas of campus that contribute to the advising process.

2. FSU needs to develop a quarterly newsletter that would update all persons involved in the advising process on all changes affecting that system. This letter could include such things as new course or experimental course offerings, reminders of basic placement guidelines for developmental classes, important cultural activities in the coming term and any other information a unit on campus would see as important. This newsletter would put in one place information that currently is dispersed through numerous offices on campus.

3. The development of an electronic hold that would prevent underprepared students from registering for classes by telephone until they had completed all appropriate improvement course work or established a certain HPA or level of credit hour production. This hold would force the advisee back into the advisor's office presenting the opportunity for the advisor-advisee relationship to develop and become productive.

4. The mandating of placement into improvement classes for all students whose records warrant such placement. This would allow advisors the authority to put students into appropriate improvement classes. Currently, advisors can only recommend such placement.

5. The development of training programs to assist advisors who deal with special populations of advisees. These populations clearly require an understanding and skill ability that most advisors do not have. FSU cannot expect quality advising without giving the training that is needed.

6. The development of a uniform faculty advisor handbook for all advisors in all schools on campus. In reviewing the material currently distributed in the various schools, it is very similar in content. Coordinating this effort would save time, money, and reduce the chance of misinformation being distributed. Any specific information unique to a school could be inserted at publication time.

7. The development of an ongoing (during first term) training program for new faculty advisors. The information overload new faculty go through at orientation is not adequate training for such an important task. In some cases, new faculty come from business and industry and have no previous experience advising students.

8. The development of a freshman advising center that would serve all undecided and underprepared students. The center is a realistic way to effectively cope with the varying needs of the special populations of freshmen. The center would handle all scheduling, act as a referral source both for faculty and self referral by students. It would do monitoring and intrusive advising, which the literature affirms as an absolute necessity if an advising program is to be effective with the underprepared.

9. The expansion of the G-E 103 Freshman Seminar class that the CSP uses to deliver its advising services. This could be done by recruiting a variety of professional staff, administrators and faculty volunteers to teach and act as advisors for the undecided and underprepared student. The use of personnel from all across campus would symbolize the collaborative, holistic approach to helping FSU students. The training for this advising system could be provided by current CSP faculty.

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EXAMPLE OF AN ACTUAL ACADEMIC ADVISING

POLICY STATEMENT

ADVISING POLICY DOCUMENT

A. The functions of academic advising include:

1. Providing students with information on policies, procedures, and programs of the university;

2. Assisting students in choosing educational and career objectives commensurate with their interests and abilities;

3. Assisting students in exploring the possible short- and long-range consequences of their choices; and

4. Making students aware of the wide range of services and educational opportunities that may be pertinent to their educational objectives at this university.

This process involves a set of constructive and cooperative relationships between students and qualified members of the academic community.

B. Academic advising is based upon a complex of policies, procedures, publications, personnel, and services that are supervised on a university-wide basis by the Vice President for Academic Affairs who is responsible for:

1. Articulation of the many components of the academic advising program, including each academic school and division or department, Credentials Office, and the Advising and Orientation Office;

2. Review and evaluation of the academic advising program;

3. Development of appropriate procedures for the academic advising program.

C. Each academic school and department, along with the Advising and Orientation Office, shall provide:

1. A clear delineation of responsibility for academic advising;

2. A high degree of visibility of the program to majors, minors, and prospective majors;

3. Orientation for all faculty participating as advisors;

4. Orientation for appropriate support services, staff, and students involved in academic advising;

5. A continuity of academic advising services from year to year, as well as throughout the calendar year;

6. Distribution of faculty academic advisor office hours and assurance that office hours are observed.

D. The University Officers, each academic school and department, and the advising and Orientation Office shall make every effort to provide students, faculty, and appropriate staff with accurate information in the Catalog, Class Schedule, and other publications. Both prospective and enrolled students and faculty must regard the Catalog (and officially-approved supplements) as an authoritative and reliable description of courses, degree programs, and university requirements. Therefore, changes in curriculum shall not become effective until published in the Catalog, unless specifically approved for an earlier implementation date by the President. If changes are approved for implementation prior to appearing in the Catalog, the appropriate school, department, or program shall inform all students affected by the change.

E. The Advising and Orientation Office, among its duties, will:

1. Gather and disseminate appropriate academic advising material to assist school, department, and program advising coordinators;

2. Act as a reference service and respond to questions from the school, department, and program advising coordinators, as well as from faculty and students;

3. Be familiar with campus-wide advising problems and formulate and make suggestions for the improvement of the advising program;

4. Provide academic advising orientation and in-service training and development for faculty members and advising coordinators;

5. Be responsible for and coordinate the academic advising program for undeclared majors;

6. In cooperation with academic units, coordinate advising and counseling services for students on academic probation or subject to disqualification.

F. Each academic department, or school in the case of interdisciplinary programs, will designate at least one advising coordinator and one for each credential and pre-professional program generally associated with the department, school, or program. Assigned time, commensurate with duties, shall be determined by the academic unit with the approval of the President or designee.

G. Individual departments will continue to maintain the advising files of students majoring in their programs.

H. The advising coordinators for each major and minor will:

1. Be responsible for, but not necessarily perform, all the activities associated with developing and maintaining an effective and visible advising program for current and prospective majors and minors, including those in the credential program.

2. Serve as liaison and consult with the Advising and Orientation Office, Placement and Career Information Office, Counseling Office, and Credentials Office when appropriate.

I. All departments shall set up a required program of academic advising for new and readmitted students. New and readmitted students are required to see their academic advisor either prior to their initial registration or during the first semester they are enrolled. Continuing students may be required, at the discretion of their departments or schools, to see their academic advisor at a time deemed necessary by those departments or schools. Students who participate in the class reservation process may be required to see their advisors prior to reserving classes, again at the discretion of their departments.

J. Academic advising is a primary responsibility of faculty and should be integrally related to the education process. Departments and divisions should designate for academic advising those faculty who are informed and motivated as academic advisors. Effective academic advising, in line with Executive Memorandum 79-19, shall be credited toward retention, tenure, or promotion. It should be a specific topic of review in appropriate cases.

K. It is the responsibility of each student to know and meet graduation and other requirements and to make every reasonable effort to obtain adequate academic advising. Frequent advisor contact will help to ensure the student has current academic information and is making adequate progress toward educational goals.

OBJECTIVES FOR AN ACADEMIC ADVISING PROGRAM

1. Minimize the frustration of students and faculty during registration and drop-add periods.

2. Ensure that all students have access to reliable and valid academic advising services at all times throughout the academic week.

3. Ensure that all academic advisors are providing specific and accurate information.

4. Maximize student awareness of short and long range educational goals.

5. Facilitate successful attainment of students' educational/career goals.

6. Facilitate students' achievement of G.P.A.s consistent with their abilities.

7. Getting as many faculty involved in student advisement as possible.

8. Getting qualified students involved in assisting other students with advisement procedures and the mechanics of registration.

9. Improving the retention of students in their collegiate programs.

10. Integrate the resources and expertise of professional

student services personnel and faculty in the delivery of advisement services.

11. Ensure that all students have access to a caring and personal relationship with some "important" person in the college community.

12. Preparation and distribution of materials to assist advisors in providing correct information to students regarding registration procedures, academic regulations, and graduation requirements.

13. Ensure that all advisors are informed as to the various campus resources which may be utilized for referral purposes.

14. Maintain an on-going, in-service training program for all individuals involved in the delivery of academic advisement services.

15. Encourage all students to seek advisement from their designated advisor at least once each semester at times other than the peak periods of registration or other major administrative programs.

16. Ensure that all advisors have access to necessary student records.